

**CLASS: TWELVE WEEK – DECODING AND LIVING ACIM
WEEK EIGHT - GENERAL HANDOUT WEEK # 8 HANDOUT # 1**

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Opening prayer: from ACIM T.2.5.18

“ I am here only to be truly helpful. I am here to represent Him Who sent me. I do not have to worry about what to say or what to do, because He Who sent me will direct me. I am content to be wherever He wishes, knowing He goes there with me. I will be healed as I let Him teach me to heal. And so it is.

Discussion of homework assignment from week # 7: Honesty, Compassion and Oneness Exercise

Review of last week's terms: Ego, specialness and sacrifice

Comments regarding Lesson # 31-35 & Summary Lesson # 57

Question: What is the opposite of sacrifice?

Question: What is “divine selfishness”?

Question: Can we “serve” and not be judgmental?

Instead of requiring sacrifice, ACIM asks us to be divinely selfish. ACIM asks that we reclaim our divine birthright and be vigilant only for God and God's Will. God's Will is that we be happy. To the ego the idea of service is associated with sacrifice. Perceiving inequality within the Sonship, the ego believes that service to others requires that we must sacrifice our own best interest so that another's needs can be met. This assumes that we are separate ego-bodies rather than unlimited spirit. Thus, egoic service reinforces the erroneous concept that we are the body. ACIM states that the greatest service that we can render to ourselves and another is to accept the truth and remember what we truly are. Coming from this truth of what you are, you do not attempt to make the false real. You see all experiences as merely an expression of love or a cry for love. The only proper response to a cry for love is to respond with love. You recognize that to give is to receive for there is only the One. This recognizes the truth in another instead of attempting to administer to the effect of error in thought. You cannot correct an error in thinking unless you correct the false premise upon which it is based.

Justice

Webster defines **Justice** = to reward or penalize as deserved

Webster defines **bring to justice** = to cause a wrongdoer to be tried in court and duly punished

Webster defines **do justice to** = to treat fitly or fairly

Is God just?

ACIM says that God is just. If we have committed a crime, a just God would have to punish us. This is only fair that we should be rewarded or punished for our actions. If two

people are given an order, one follows the order and the other does not, should both be given the same reward or punishment?

If I have disobeyed God, shouldn't I be punished?

The answer is yes but the question assumes the impossible. ACIM states that it is impossible to disobey God. To be able to disobey God would be a contradiction to the definition of what God Is. A God of Love's Will is that we be happy. To be happy we must be totally free to be or imagine anything we want without the threat of punishment or penalty. An effect cannot change its cause and we cannot force God to stop loving us. We can deny this flow but we cannot stop the flow.

Question: If I believe I have disobeyed God, shouldn't God punish me?

ACIM says NO, because dreams are not punishable offenses. Only the person who believes provisional reality to be real would require "justice" and "punishment" to be dealt upon the perceived wrongdoer. God only see us as He created us, perfect, whole and complete, a part of the oneness that God is. If I awaken from a dream and there is no "real" body to be found, I will not be convicted of the crime of murder. Just because I dreamed something, it does not make it true. God is truth. God judges not, for there is nothing to judge. What is there to judge when all there is, is a Oneness? If God were to judge or "punish" us for something that happened in our dream, He would be giving reality to our illusion. This is why ACIM says that God judges not. God's only judgment is to know the truth, which is that we are His perfect creation, a shared Oneness.

ACIM states that in this world of provisional reality the only justice to be found arises out of the thought system of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, through the use of the learning tool of forgiveness, teaches that justice is the divine correction for all the injustice that we have chosen to perceive in our world. If I insist that my dream is real, I may be insane but insanity is not a punishable offense. The Holy Spirit only requests that we reawaken to the truth of that we are.

Reference: M-19.1 Justice is the divine correction for injustice. 2 Injustice is the basis for all the judgments of the world. 3 Justice corrects the interpretations to which injustice gives rise, and cancels them out. 4 Neither justice nor injustice exists in Heaven, for error is impossible and correction meaningless. 5 In this world, however, forgiveness depends on justice, since all attack can only be unjust. 6 Justice is the Holy Spirit's verdict upon the world. 7 Except in His judgment justice is impossible, for no one in the world is capable of making only just interpretations and laying all injustices aside. 8 If God's Son were fairly judged, there would be no need for salvation. 9 The thought of separation would have been forever inconceivable.

What is God's justice for us?

Salvation is God's justice for his creation. It is the restoration of the Sonship's return to knowledge, which is the Will of God. Our mistaken belief that we have sinned and offended God cannot cause God to stop loving His Child. The dreamer has awakened from their insane dream of separation. What was mistakenly believed to be separate has returned to the reality of its eternal Oneness.

Reference: M-19.4. Salvation is God's justice. 2 It restores to your awareness the wholeness of the fragments you perceive as broken off and separate. 3 And it is this that overcomes the fear of death. 4 For separate fragments must decay and die, but wholeness

is immortal. 5 It remains forever and forever like its Creator, being one with Him. 6 God's Judgment is His justice. 7 Onto this,—a Judgment wholly lacking in condemnation; an evaluation based entirely on love,—you have projected your injustice, giving God the lens of warped perception through which you look. 8 Now it belongs to Him and not to you. 9 You are afraid of Him, and do not see you hate and fear your Self as enemy.

Judgment

Question: Have you ever judged something, only to discover that you lack all the facts and were, therefore, wrong?

Question: What must we have to judge correctly?

Question: Can we get a fair trial if the jury has wrongly prejudged us?

Judgment should be based on facts, not fiction. Because we have forgotten knowledge, we believe that we live in a dream world of provisional reality. This is a world of perception. Since we do not know what we are, how can we trust our judgment? All of our viewpoints come from our distorted notion that we are a limited ego-body. As such, our perceptions lack knowledge. The perceptions, which generate our projections, are merely preconceived ideas that “find” false witnesses in the outside world to “prove” that our desired illusion is “real”. What we call “seeing” is not vision, but merely image making. Judgment arises from our need to be special. Specialness leads to comparison, which leads to judgment. When we judge, we place something either above or below us. Rather than a oneness with a shared equality and purpose, we see individual separateness with its demand for inequality and its need to be right. When we judge another, as either “good” or “bad”, we confirm our belief in the separation. Judgment prevents us from utilizing forgiveness and love to heal the relationship.

What is the only judgment ACIM say we should make?

The only judgment we should be making is that we are not capable of judging anything correctly. Only by asking for the Holy Spirit’s guidance can we recall what we are. Only the Holy Spirit knows that we are Sons of God, who have temporarily forgotten our true nature. Because of Its unique perspective, the Holy Spirit is aware of both what we truly are, and what we dream we are in our world of provisional reality. The Holy Spirit is the only one who knows the “big picture.” It knows the interrelationships of all events in our dream world. This includes all past, present and future events. We lack all the facts, since we rely on predetermined perceptions and, therefore, are incapable of judging correctly. We do not know the “Big Picture.”

What is God’s final or last judgment?

God’s one and only judgment is to know the truth, which is:

“This is God's Final Judgment: "You are still My holy Son, forever innocent, forever loving and forever loved, as limitless as your Creator, and completely changeless and forever pure. 2 Therefore awaken and return to Me. 3 I am your Father and you are My Son." **Reference: W-Part II .10.5**

Does the above quote sound like this is someone you should fear?

God is only Love.

Also see ACIM Workbook Part II ,Section #10 What Is the Last Judgment?

Forgiveness

Webster defines forgiveness = the act of giving up all claim to punishment or exact penalty for an offense

Note that this definition both implies and assumes that there is a victim and a victimizer and that a punishable action has taken place.

Question: Can we forgive someone who has “wronged” us?

The problem with the question is that it assumes that some outside force could “wrong” us without our granting them this power. ACIM says this is impossible. We are the creators of our fantasy. We write our own scripts. There are no victims or victimizers, just actors in the game of separation.

ACIM states that forgiveness requires seeing your brother as an equal. Forgiveness requires no sacrifice or action on our part. The only requirement is to forgive yourself for the wrongs you thought your brother did to you. When we understand how projection works, we realize that we are the source, or cause, and that we receive what we give. By giving forgiveness, we get forgiveness for ourselves. The only forgiveness that a Oneness could possibly receive would be to himself. By holding our brother in the prison of judgment, we also force ourselves to remain in the same prison as the jailed. The only way out for the jailer is to unlock the doors of the prison for all. Until judgment has been dropped, the jailer has lost his freedom due to the requirement “to be right” rather than “to be happy.” ACIM states that the only thing that we need to remember is that dreams are not punishable and, therefore, there is nothing to forgive. Forgiveness only requires that we realize the truth about our brother and ourselves. The truth is that we have never left the Oneness of the Mind of God.

Reference: W-pII.1.1. Forgiveness recognizes what you thought your brother did to you has not occurred. 2 It does not pardon sins and make them real. 3 It sees there was no sin. 4 And in that view are all your sins forgiven. 5 What is sin, except a false idea about God's Son? 6 Forgiveness merely sees its falsity, and therefore lets it go. 7 What then is free to take its place is now the Will of God.

The forgiveness granted by the Holy Spirit always corrects the erroneous belief that some outside force has the power to hurt you. Since you are spirit, you have been given the total freedom and creative power to experience anything you wish. The Holy Spirit does not attempt to make our illusion real. It merely reinterprets our illusions to align with the truth. It merely states that your wrong perception cannot change the truth of what you truly are. There are no victims. We are all voluntary actors in the game of separation. Forgiveness is the tool utilized by the Holy Spirit to aid us in the reawakening process of

remembering what we are. Unlike the ego, the Holy Spirit does not attempt to make our illusions appear real

Review ACIM Workbook Part II, Section #1 What Is Forgiveness?

Review **WB Lesson #192** and **WB Lesson # 193**.

WB Lesson # 192 -- I have a function God would have me fill.

In the world of perception, Level #2, our function is forgiveness. In provisional reality, forgiveness is the closest thing to creation. Forgiveness on earth means to let illusions go. We complete God for God's Son has the power to translate in form the wholly formless.

WB Lesson # 193 – All things are lessons God would have me learn.

True forgiveness dissolves pain. If we are in pain, we have not chosen to completely forgive.

What is egoic forgiveness?

Egoic forgiveness always starts with the belief that some outside force could “wrong” us without our permission. In reality, we granted them any power that they appear to have over us. Because the split-minded assumes that we are a body, there does appear to be victims and victimizers in this perceived world of time and space. The ego always starts with the basic premise that an offense or sin has occurred and, therefore, the victimizers must be punished for their wrongdoing. This premise insures that we remain under the control of the egoic thought system. Believing that someone has been truly wronged, egoic justice now demands that the wrongdoer must make amends. However, in egoic forgiveness, at least temporarily, we suspend this right to retribution. Yet, we still fully accept the concept that we have been harmed and that the criminal is deserving of punishment. We normally also prefer or require an admission of guilt from the wrongdoer. We then claim that out of the kindness of our heart we will “forgive and forget.” Yet to “forgive and forget” automatically instills inequality into the relationship. It requires either sacrifice on the part of the forgiver (they give up their rights of retribution) or the belief that the forgiver is “holier” than the wrongdoer. In either case, the forgiver gets to claim ownership of the “high ground” at the expense of the wrongdoer. Typically, egoic forgiveness is merely a temporary suspension of our retribution from the wrongdoer. It is customarily treated as an IOU that can be played at any future date by the forgiver in order to get their way against their former nemesis. The IOU can also be used to justify a future “wrong doing” against the original perpetrator of the crime so that we can balance the slate.

Egoic forgiveness always first makes the “crime” real and then confirms and maintains the perceived inequality and separation between the two parties. In contrast, the forgiveness granted by the Holy Spirit always corrects this false idea that some outside force has the power to harm you without your subconscious or conscious permission. Since you are spirit, you have been given the total freedom and creative power to experience anything you wish. There are no victims, merely actors in the reawakening process of rediscovering what you truly are. The ego does not want you to remember this fact.

If reality is a Oneness, what is there to forgive?

ACIM states that God's Will for the Sonship is to be a changeless, perfect Oneness. In the Mind of God, how could perfection ever do anything wrong that would require punishment and forgiveness? God always see us as perfect, whole and complete. Since God and the Sonship are a Oneness, what is there to forgive? The thought of sin is impossible. The only need for forgiveness would be in the mind of one who judges. Judgment arises from the insane dream that the separation is real. Only in the mind of the dreamer is there a "wrong" that requires "forgiveness." True forgiveness cannot be given for a price. In the ego's world, which is governed by the concept of "give to get," forgiveness is only granted at some price. According to **ACIM**, if we "forgive" someone with the expectation of getting something in return, this is not true forgiveness. It is a form of bartering. If we have truly been wronged, justice would demand that the wrongdoer must make amends. To "forgive and forget" would be to instill inequality into the relationship. This is because it would require either sacrifice on the part of the forgiver, or the concept that the forgiver is "holier" than the wrongdoer. In either case, this would not be justice. Because of this fact, **ACIM** states that true forgiveness must recognize the truth for what the truth is. In the Mind of God, our dream world is not real. Therefore, as Son's of God, we must realize that our dreams cannot harm others or ourselves. Illusions are not real and, therefore, nothing in our dream world has "wronged" us. There is nothing to forgive. Only by recognizing that our brother has not "sinned" can true forgiveness be granted. **ACIM** defines forgiveness as recognizing what you thought your brother did to you has never occurred. Forgiveness looks past the illusion and sees your brother for what he really is, a Oneness, which we all share.

Evolution of Judgment to True Forgiveness and the Four Levels of Learning

Moving from an egoic judging machine to a mindset of true forgiveness and allowance is a learning process. It requires listening to the Voice of the Holy Spirit. Below would be an example of this growth process as we move up the four levels of learning.

- 1) **Level #1 Unconscious Incompetence:** You believe you have the ability to judge correctly. You don't know that you don't have all the facts and, therefore, are incapable of judging correctly. You judge anyway and believe your judgment is correct.
- 2) **Level #2 Conscious Incompetence:** New facts come to your attention. You realize that you have judged incorrectly and modify your judgment. You now realize you did not have the big picture and, therefore, were incapable of judging correctly.
- 3) **Level #3 Conscious Competence:** You develop the skills to refrain from or move out of judgment. You realize that you lack the big picture and ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit to reinterpret your judgment and replace it with forgiveness. You still need to be consciously vigilant against your ego's judging mechanisms.
- 4) **Level #4 Unconscious Competence.** You know you cannot judge correctly and, therefore, automatically follow the guidance of Holy Spirit. Rather than judge you forgive. Without any conscious effort, your natural state is one of allowance

Seeing the World of perception as a neutral learning device

Perhaps, it would be helpful to remember what our dream world of provisional reality was made for. To the ego, this world was made to keep God's love out and to "prove" we are separate. The Holy Spirit reinterprets the ego's world and transforms it into a neutral learning device. To the Holy Spirit, the world is a place to use so that we can relearn and remember what our true spiritual nature is. If we view this world of perception as a "playschool", we can better understand how this learning device works. This playschool was designed so that we could not hurt ourselves no matter what kind of "mistakes" we might make. There is no "sin". When a mistake is made, it needs only to be corrected. No punishment is required since no "sin" has been committed. Because we have become totally immersed in the game, the dream appears "real" to us. This appearance of reality gives us the illusion that we are actually experiencing the event instead of merely observing and practicing in some simulated learning device. Thus, the playschool of our own provisional reality becomes a "real learning experience" rather than just some facts to memorize. We appear to be "being and living" the simulated learning experience. Thus we are relearning that we have a shared purpose and a shared being. By the use of forgiveness, we remember what we are. By giving forgiveness, we receive forgiveness. To give is to receive. This is God's Law.

When you see the world of individuated perception as a playschool, all participants become mere actors who have assigned roles in the game of separation so that you can ultimately rediscover your true spiritual magnificence. There are no victims and there are no victimizers. Only willing participants in the reawakening process. We are conduits for love and love is the creative process which time utilizes to reawaken sleeping minds to their magnificence as the Christ.

Judgment and discernment

These terms are closely related and both involve the observation of an event and ultimately how you choose to react to that perceived event. In discernment, one observes the happening without placing any preconceived judgments upon the experience. The person is an impartial observer of what he or she perceives to be the facts. Discernment is the characteristic of the impartial juror. Based upon their observed "facts," the impartial juror draws what they perceive to be a logical conclusion. They do not have an agenda nor are they attached to some predetermined results. Their attitude simply put is "It is what it is." There is no good or bad, they just respond to the facts before them without condemnation or judgment. If they are driving and see a red light, they understand that an appropriate response would be to stop the car until the light turns green. The light is seen as a neutral event. The light is not considered either good or bad or out to get them. The light "just is." In judgment, the person utilizes past egoic filters to determine that the event is either good or bad. They take things personally and ascribe good or bad intentions to the event. They take a vested interest in their desired outcome. To them, events are not neutral and being right is more important than being

happy. In the example of the light, they too see the red light as a signal that tells them it would be appropriate to stop. Yet, they take it beyond discernment and place intentions upon the event. They take the neutral red light personally and perceive this outside event as actually either good or bad. Now the light is “out to get them.” When you judge, occurrences are not seen as neutral events, but rather as something that has the ability to affect their happiness and inner peace. The world becomes a fearful place of conflict and struggle.

Homework: Complete exercise: Walk for Forgiveness & Atonement. We will discuss this exercise next week.

Homework: Review handouts. Complete next five Lessons # 36-40 & Summary Lesson # 58 REVIEW NOTE: Decoding of terms

Group meditation or Ending Prayer

Ending prayer: Father, I believed I had lost my divine birthright. Now, I realize I was only “living” in my own self-created nightmare of illusion. I reawaken now to reclaim my divine birthright. Thank you for preserving what I feared I had lost. I forgive my brother and myself and remember all that you have given me. Your unconditional Love is all there is. I love myself unconditionally. Your Will is only that Your Child be happy. I now freely embrace Your Will as my own will. I come home to You, Father. Your prodigal son has return to his source. I join in the Oneness that is You. And so it is.

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